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"When he received intelligence of this distinction, he returned.

"Those who knew him in Rome said, that reserved and taciturn as he was, the arrival of this news seemed to overwhelm him with joy. He gave a farewell entertainment to his fellow-students, and was, for the first time in his life, hospitable, and almost cordial. Before a fortnight had elapsed he was in Paris; but if his absence had been fortunate in one way, it had been fatal in another; if he had gained fame, he had lost happiness.

"Mademoiselle Dumesnil was married to his brother.

"Totally unprepared for the blow, he had hastened to her *hôtel* immediately upon his arrival. He asked for Mademoiselle Dumesnil, and was told that Madame Prévost was within. He entered, and found her in her boudoir reading the last new novel by Dumas, with his brother, in his dressing-gown and slippers, sipping his morning chocolate on the opposite side of the table. Hippolyte had played his cards well, and while Camille was toiling day and night in his Roman *atelier*, the more fortunate and less scrupulous elder had stepped in, and borne away the bride and her twenty thousand livres of dowry.

"The lady received him as if there had never been any affection or understanding between them. Hippolyte affected to welcome his brother with delight, and pressed him to make the *Hôtel Prévost* his home whenever he was in Paris. Camille disguised his rage and disappointment under an impenetrable mask of silent politeness. He neither wept nor stormed. He was outwardly cold and cynical as ever, and did not betray by word or glance the passions that were boiling at his heart. When he withdrew, after a brief stay of scarcely half an hour, Monsieur and Madame Prévost flattered themselves that he had forgotten all the circumstances of his early passion.

"Three years travel and application, *ma chère*," said the husband, as he put on his gloves for his daily ride in the Bois de Boulogne, 'make wonderful havoc in a lover's memory.'

"About a week afterwards the body of M. Prévost was found murdered in one of the retired *contre-allées* of the wood, with his horse standing beside him. He had been shot through the head.

"No suspicion attached to any one—there were no traces of the assassin—the police were completely baffled in their investigations, and after a while the event was forgotten. Camille, who had inherited the bulk of his brother's property, continued to follow his profession with great industry, and many said that he would now, in all probability be united to the fair and wealthy widow; but no, he never re-entered the *Hôtel Prévost*, and it was at last rumoured that he had made a vow to see and speak with her no more.

"About this time he began his last and finest painting—'Cain, after the murder of Abel.' It is not necessary for me to describe to you the merits of this wonderful composition, for you, Frank, of all men, except the artist, can best appreciate them.

"Ever since his return from Italy, Camille Prévost had sunk deeper and deeper into a dark and sullen melancholy. He had always been misanthropic, but now he seemed to shun all contact with his fellow-creatures. He was never seen to cross the threshold of his door, and it was said that he worked all day, and nearly all night upon his picture; and during this time his despondency increased continually. People said that the murder of his brother had given a painful shock to his feelings; but whether it was so, or whether the fearful subject, and still more fearful working up of the 'Cain,' dwelt too forcibly upon his imagination, as in your case, I cannot tell. At all events he became subject to paroxysms of nervous terror, at which times he would scream aloud, as if unable to bear the sight of the painting, and once or twice was discovered insensible at the foot of the easel. His servant, on one of these occasions, called in the assistance of a medical man, who, on the artist's recovery, endeavoured, but without avail, to induce him to desist from art for awhile, and try the effect of change of air and scene. Camille, with the fatal obstinacy of his disposition, refused to listen, and treated the doctor with so much rudeness that the visit was repeated no more.

"At last the painting was finished, and has since obtained a place on the walls of the Luxembourg. Doubtless, it will one day—to use the words of the catalogue—receive a last and honourable asylum in the galleries of the Louvre, where it will take a place

beside its illustrious predecessors, and continue the History of French Art."

"But the artist!" I exclaimed, when Leroy had finished speaking; "what became of the artist?"

We had some little time since risen from our seat in the gardens, and were now walking arm-in-arm through some of the quiet old-fashioned streets of the Faubourg St. Germain. As I spoke we arrived just in front of the heavy wooden gates of a large private mansion in the Rue de Mont Parnasse. To my surprise Leroy, without replying to my question, raised the heavy knocker, and on the *concierge* presenting himself in answer to his summons, we were instantly admitted.

Leroy seemed known to all there, for when we met a plainly-dressed livery-servant in the courtyard, the man touched his hat and conversed for some moments in an under tone with my companion. He then preceded us up the steps and into the house, where we were received by an elderly gentleman dressed in a complete suit of black, who shook hands politely with Leroy, and desired the servant to conduct the gentlemen to the east wing.

Everything in this house seemed so silent and oppressive that even Leroy's usual spirits had forsaken him. Since we had reached the door he had not addressed a single word to me, and something appeared to restrain me from even repeating my unanswered question.

The servant led us, silently and swiftly, through several long corridors, and stopped at last before a door thickly clamped with iron. I had observed in this gallery that the doors were all secured in a similar manner.

He drew a key from his pocket, unlocked it, and motioned us to enter. We were in a small sitting-room, neatly but plainly furnished. There was a bookcase at one end and an easel with a half-finished painting (a wretched fantastic daub, by the way) at the other. The window, like the door, was secured with iron bars.

There were strange sounds in the inner room, I thought, as our guide, still preceding us, went over and entered.

A strange sight, though, met my eyes when I followed him. A raving madman strapped upon a bed, cursing the attendant by his side, laughing, yelling, and crying aloud that *he, he* was Cain, and the murderer of his brother!

"There is the artist, Frank," said Leroy, pointing to the bed, "there is Camille Prévost. This is one of his violent moods. That fatal picture drove one painter mad, my poor boy, and I was determined that it should not do so by another."

"But did he really murder his brother?" I asked, as I turned away pale and shuddering.

"God only knows," said my friend, solemnly, "and He alone can judge the culprit now. Jealousy is a dreadful passion. Pray to Him that you may never know its misery."

## THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.

ONE of the effects of the present happy union between two nations which should have ever been joined happily in almost marital connexion, has been the foundation of "an Exhibition in London of the productions of the most popular artists of France," which it is hoped "must greatly contribute to augment the esteem of the British public for the French school."

Under the direction of a visiting committee, consisting of two celebrated English artists, Messrs. Stanfield and Macclise, and four other gentlemen more or less connected with art, this Exhibition, the first of its kind, has been opened at No. 121, Pall Mall, opposite the Opera colonnade.

The various specimens of the French masters there exhibited are not very numerous (there are but 195 pictures catalogued, a few others appear since to have been added), nor do we believe them to form by any means a fair criterion of the power and ability of artistic France. Still they are decidedly worthy and interesting, and in a few cases, such as the "Delaroche and Ary Scheffer," works of genius which could not be surpassed by any other nation.

The most noticeable thing which strikes the visitor unaccustomed

to French pictures, is the want of that glowing colour which peculiarly distinguishes the English, and also the excellent drawing almost everywhere prevalent, an excellence unfortunately not observable in every English picture. There is also, here, a large preponderance of conversational cabinet pictures, beautifully drawn, and imagined with great delicacy, but wanting in force and colour.

Another peculiarity is the arrangement or the numbers, which are not consecutive upon the walls, but stuck about in the oddest manner possible, No. 1 being next to 45, and the next to 102, and so on. Upon consulting the catalogue, the visitor finds that all pictures by the same artist have consecutive numbers; but the pictures being of various sizes, and thus requiring to be separated, the numbers attached thus appear as if they had come up in a lottery.

(No. 6), "Repose," by Henri Baron, is almost familiarised to the reader from his acquaintance with the artist's illustrations upon wood. It is a pleasing design, of good colour.

(No. 7), "The Rose-coloured Domino," by Joseph Beaume, an artist of standing, and celebrated in Paris, is the very best specimen of portrait painting, both as to finish, colour, and grace, in the exhibition. The work in question is, indeed, of very high-class merit.

(No. 10), "Madame Du Barry consulting Cagliostro on her Destiny," by François Braid, is rather distinguished for its subject than for its treatment.

(No. 13), "Gulliver in the island of Brobdignag—microscopic studies of plants in the forest of Fontainebleau," by the same artist, is worthy to be classed with any eccentric absurdity ever perpetrated by a painter. It is absurd because it travels out of the region of art. An immense canvas is covered with gigantic leaves and flowers, insects, etc., which almost hide Gulliver, who in relation to them is a pigmy, and who seeks to escape from an immense hand, which, with part of a face, far bigger than that

"Of Memphian sphinx,  
Pedestalled, haply, in some palace court,  
When sages looked to Egypt for their lore,"

is shown in a corner of the picture ready to pounce upon him. Had this been the only picture by Braid, we should have been inclined to speak but slightly of him. (No. 14) however, "The Interior of a Custom-house," with an enraged lady, whose bonnet has been completely sacrificed by the douaniers, and several other victims of these intelligent officers, affords us one of the few pictures which are provocative of mirth, and at the same time artistic. The picture before us is full of very high comedy, and although hilarious in the highest degree, and perfectly true to nature, is by no means coarse.

(No. 43), "The Portrait of the Emperor on Horseback," by Alfred de Dreux, is admirable, not only as a portrait, but as a work of art. The position is spirited and free; the drawing of the horse might be improved.

(No. 46), "An Arab Woman," by Auguste Delacroix, is a fine study, remarkable for its colour.

Paul Delaroche, one of the greatest of French artists, not only of the present day, but also of all time, is represented here by four specimens from his pencil. (No. 49), "The Great Artists of the Revival," which seems to be a sketch of the composition painted in fresco in the hemicycle of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, and which is scarcely within our province; (No. 50), "The Death of the Duc de Guise;" (No. 50\*), "Napoleon at Fontainebleau;" and (No. 51), "The Burgomaster's Family," a sepia drawing. Of these "The Death of the Duc de Guise" is the chief. It is the property of the Duc d'Aumale, and is a work of art of the highest class, at the same time that it is of the most ambitious kind—the historical. The stiffening corpse of Guise, lying with glazed eyes and matted hair; the whispering group of assassins, one of whom is sheathing his sword; the approach of the king, who draws back the arras with a guilty look, are all excellent. The grouping and attitudes are true to nature, and by no means exaggerated. The costume and details of the picture accurate and most carefully painted. The *chiaroscuro* is especially remarkable, everything being perfectly distinct in the darkened gloom of the vast chamber. This

picture has been now painted some twenty years, and criticism on so well known and valued a work of art may, therefore, be somewhat supererogatory.

Louis Devidoux, pupil of Paul Delaroche, contributes two specimens of paintings, which are both excellent in colour, but which are destroyed by the subject; they are (No. 52), "The Chinese Guitarist," in which a not ungraceful Chinese woman is represented as playing upon that instrument, and (No. 53), a pendant to the foregoing. The high cheekbones, and the transverse position of the eye betokening the Mongolian race, render the pictures so opposite to ideas of beauty formed in an European school, that we look upon these rather as curiosities than works of art.

(No. 54) and (No. 56), "Cupid and the Graces," and the "Woodcutter's Family," quite stand out from amongst the surrounding pictures; the colour being remarkably beautiful, very much in the manner of the best productions of Titian. They are painted by Diaz, an artist who has studied much in Rome.

Of (No. 67), "Cows and Landscape," and (No. 67\*), another "Landscape," by the same artist, Raymond Esbrat, we can say little favourably. In truth, the French do not by any means excel in landscape. Not so, however, in cabinet conversational pictures, of which the next thirteen pictures in the catalogue, from No. 68 to No. 80, are excellent examples. The four first, "Consulting Cards," "A Young lady," "Meditation," and "A Page," are by Jean Fauvelet, a pupil of Lacour. The remainder are by Eugene Fichel, pupil of Drolling and Delaroche. Of his productions, "The Music Lesson," and "The Desert," are probably the best, but all are excellent. The drawing is capital, the accessories well managed, and the colour, which is the most faulty part of the pictures, is delicate. The great fault in these little gems is, that they want force; but a little varnish, for which the majority of the pictures in the exhibition are perishing, would add both brilliancy and force to them.

From No. 161 to No. 168, the productions of Antoine Emille Plassan, are cabinet pictures, so delicate in their finish, and chaste in their execution, that they have attracted universal attention and admiration; the best of this artist's productions (No. 162), "The Foot Bath," a little picture, which is perfect in every respect, has been, we hear, purchased by Queen Victoria, at a price which, for the size, is very high indeed. It does not measure more than ten or twelve inches, and has been sold for forty guineas.

(No. 170), "An Incident in the life of Peter the Great, wherein he attends Menzikoff upon his sick bed," by Robert Fleury, is an historical composition of great merit. It does not, however, from its size and the unpleasant nature of the composition, show to advantage in this gallery.

(No. 176) is an admirable drawing of a "Turkish Odalisque, laughing, as she indolently lounges in the enjoyment of a Chibouque." The texture of the skin, the ease and grace of the figure, are beautifully rendered by the artist Schlesinger.

The great attraction of the room is the piece by Ary Scheffer, a reproduction of his picture so well known from the engravings published of the "Francesca di Rimini of Dante." The entire devotion of love was never more thoroughly and chastely exhibited; Paolo, in pain and contrition, veils his face from Dante and Virgil, whilst around him Francesca clasps her arms, tears at the time starting from her eyes, as, thus embracing, the figures are borne onwards through the gloom of Hades.

"As doves  
By fond desire invited, on wide wings  
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home,  
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along;  
Thus issued, from that troop where Dido ranks,  
They through the ill air speeding."

Dante. *Inf. Cant. v.*

Her Britannic Majesty, we believe, commissioned the admirable artist to execute this duplicate, for which she has given £1,200. Ary Scheffer has five other productions in the gallery, but none of them are of equal interest with the one we have criticised, and all of them want the glow of colour which distinguishes Titian, Rubens, and our own Etty.